

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
PANAMA BUREAU
DRAWER 927
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6 April 1982
MPA #0010

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report -- Panama Bureau -- March 1982

I. GENERAL

Treaty Transition: March 31 marked the end of the 30-month transition period mandated by Article XI of the Panama Canal Treaty during which U.S. courts and police continued to operate in the former Canal Zone. As of 1 April, the remaining U.S. courts were disestablished and most criminal and all civil cases involving U.S. citizens anywhere in Panama will be tried in Panamanian courts. As Panamanian authorities hailed the event as the demise of another vestige of U.S. colonialism, there was some unease among U.S. residents of the former Canal Zone. A relatively minor incident during the month in which Panamanian police stopped a DOD school bus and forcibly removed two American students returning home from Balboa High School tended to reflect the reason for some of this concern. The two students were hit with nightsticks and taken to the Ancon Police Station. The precise reason for their arrest is unknown. No charges were placed against them and they were quickly returned to their homes by two U.S. military policemen who happened to be at the police station when they were brought in.

Commissary Closing: Bureau staff personnel got a break when the life of the Balboa Commissary, scheduled to close on 1 April as part of the treaty transition, was extended until 1984. The Balboa commissary is one of three serving the entire U.S. military, government and Pan Canal Commission community on the Pacific side.

Health Benefits: March 31 was the deadline for eligible bureau non-staff personnel to decide whether to continue health insurance coverage under the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program or switch to coverage under the Panama Social Security System. Employees under FEHBP lose access to Gorgas Hospital and other DOD medical facilities at the end of the Canal Treaty transition period, 31 March. After that date health care must be obtained from Panamanian hospitals and clinics.

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II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. A flurry of high-interest events in Central America kept the Bureau file at a high level throughout the month (26,000 words were filed on the 31st), created a continuing backlog of processing, and forced us into extensive use of overtime (some 300 man-hours for the month). Some 450,000 words were filed -- the highest figure in a year.

a. In a 3 March "putsch," the leadership of the Panamanian National Guard was completely overturned, apparently to the surprise of President Royo.

b. On 7 March, Guatemala held elections which brought wide accusations of fraud and led on 23 March to an Army coup deposing the existing regime and nullifying the elections. Thanks to some excellent initiative and cooperation from an Embassy local technician in Guatemala City, the Bureau from the first maintained full-time watch on Guatemala radios using the remote system, even though the receiver could not be tuned from the Bureau. The coverage involved one extra midnight shift and extensive FLASH and IMMEDIATE traffic.

c. Nicaraguan fear of a U.S.-sponsored anti-Sandinist invasion gave rise to declaration of a state of emergency on 15 March. Repeated incidents on the Honduran border created much priority traffic, as did the Nicaraguan call for a special UN Security Council meeting on the situation and subsequent live coverage of debates. As a result of the state of emergency only Radio Sandino and Sandinist TV newscasts were allowed to broadcast.

d. Various initiatives for Central American peace discussions--Mexican, Nicaraguan, Honduran and U.S.--received wide coverage and priority treatment.

e. Virulent Panamanian reaction to the possible nomination of Reagan supporter Lewis Tambs as U.S. ambassador was covered closely, as was Panamanian reporting on the 1 April reversion of responsibility for legal affairs in the former Canal Zone.

f. The Salvadoran elections on 29 March necessitated a mid watch on election night; detailed reporting on partial results was filed.

2. Broadcasts of clandestine stations did not fare well during March, with Radio Farabundo Marti unheard for the most part after mid-month and poor reception of Radio Venceremos due, the station charges, to jamming from a U.S. ship which also compels it to switch frequencies several times during each broadcast. Both stations are beamed to El Salvador. The other clandestine station

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on regular coverage, Radio 15 September beamed to Nicaragua, was also heard poorly during the month.

3. [] arrived 15 March as the bureau's second editorial trainee of the year. [] departed 26 March after successfully completing the editorial training program. STAT
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4. A revision of the Bureau's Monitorial Handbook, the first since 1979, was distributed to monitors. The new handbook incorporates new bureau directives and includes procedures modified to fit MIDAS format and the use of cassettes instead of IBM belts.

B. Communications

1. Problems continued to plague the Panama Automated Relay (PAR) during the month as computer malfunctions and power failures caused numerous interruptions in bureau communications, including one outage of 18 hours.

2. Three of the bureau's five telephone lines, including its two Panama lines used for calls to or from our Central American contractors when the dedicated circuits are down, were finally restored during the month after being out of order for more than four weeks. The lines were restored only by transferring them from the Army cable, running between the bureau and Corozal Tech Control, to our UHF system. The bureau's backstop teletype circuit is all that remains on the cable, which is old and badly deteriorated. The Army has indicated considerable reluctance to maintain the cable and, we are advised, may soon decide to abandon it.

C. Technical

Latin America Regional Engineer [] visited the bureau 5 through 8 March prior to touring the four Central American remote sites. Bureau Chief Technician [] accompanied [] on his visit to the remote sites. While in Managua, the TDYers tested facsimile transmission with the bureau via the dedicated circuit using Canon telecopiers loaned to us by the local Canon dealer. Unfortunately, the tests were inconclusive. STAT
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III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

Spanish Monitor [] was promoted to Senior Monitor NM-10 effective 7 March. STAT

B. Building and Grounds

1. Annual dry season antenna maintenance was completed during the month by bureau technicians. Two antenna towers remain to be painted by the contractor.

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2. Two fire trucks and a water truck responded quickly to the bureau's call for assistance when a brush fire, whipped along by strong winds, threatened our thatch-roofed bohio and a shed used to store combustibles as well as several buildings in the area belonging to the Army. There was no damage.

3. Directorate of Facilities Engineers technicians spent considerable time at the bureau during the month working on the airconditioning system. Two chiller units were repaired and one of the five cooling coils in the system was replaced. A complete overhaul of the system will be scheduled as soon as all necessary parts are available.

IV. VISITS

A. To the bureau: [redacted] Regional Engineer for Latin America, 5-9 March; Capt. Joseph Dengel and Mr. Ted Stacklighter, U.S. Army Communications Command, Panama, 17 March for discussions on bureau phone line problems; CWO Jack Wilson, USACC, 17 March for discussion of bureau Mode I installation.

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B. From the bureau: Bureau Chief and Deputy Chief visited Col. Larry Schuman, USACC commander, 3 March to review bureau communications requirements; Bureau Chief and Chief Technician to Canon Panama S.A., 22 March to discuss test of Canon telecopier.

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[redacted]
Chief, Panama Bureau, FBIS

Attachment:
Monthly Production Report

PANAMA BUREAU PRODUCTION REPORT FOR MARCH 1982

I. TOTALS FROM ALL SOURCES:

TOTAL PUBLISHABLE WORDAGE FILED DURING MONTH:	449,620
TOTAL NON-PUBLISHABLE WORDAGE FILED DURING MONTH:	23,260
TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLISHABLE ITEMS FILED DURING MONTH:	1,187

	BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATIONS
II. <u>INPUT OF REGULAR COVERAGE:</u> (minutes or issues per week)	9,670 min	35,160 min	119.00 issues
III. <u>OUTPUT FROM ALL SOURCES:</u> (publishable words per month)			

ARGENTINA

Buenos Aires LATIN in Spanish	11,170
Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish	0
Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish	0
Buenos Aires SAPORITI in Spanish	170

AUSTRIA

Vienna OPECNA in Spanish	770
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COLOMBIA

Bogota Radio Cadena Nacional in Spanish	1,460
Bogota Emisoras Caracol in Spanish	5,670
Bogota Cadena Radial Super in Spanish	2,520
Bogota Domestic Service in Spanish	7,560
Bogota Radio Sutatenza in Spanish	130
Cucuta Voz del Norte in Spanish	150

(CLANDESTINE)

Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador	26,720
Radio Farabundo Marti in Spanish to El Salvador	13,680
Radio 15 September in Spanish to Nicaragua	8,570

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	BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATIONS
COSTA RICA			
San Jose Radio Reloj in Spanish	5,360		
San Jose LA NACION in Spanish			3,690
CUBA			
Havana International Service in Spanish	12,710		
Havana PRELA in English		11,090	
Havana PRELA in Portuguese		520	
ECUADOR			
Quito Voz de los Andes in Spanish	6,920		
Quito Cadena Ecuador Radio in Spanish	1,250		
Quito Domestic Service in Spanish	2,280		
Quito Diplomatic Service in Spanish		0	
EL SALVADOR			
San Salvador Domestic Service in Spanish	7,930		
San Salvador Cadena Sonora in Spanish	800		
San Salvador DIARIO DE HOY in Spanish			8,090
San Salvador EL MUNDO in Spanish			3,010
San Salvador LA PRENSA GRAFICA in Spanish			4,430
San Salvador DIARIO LATINO in Spanish			390
San Salvador THE NEWS GAZETTE in English			0
FRANCE			
Paris AFP in English		2,110	
Paris AFP in Spanish		36,610	
GUATEMALA			
Guatemala City Radio Nuevo Mundo in Spanish	3,110		
Guatemala City Radio-Television Guatemala in Spanish	2,690		

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	BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATIONS
Guatemala City Cadena de Emisoras Unidas in Spanish	6,650		
Guatemala City Domestic Service in Spanish	8,910		
Guatemala City Radio Fabulosa in Spanish	110		
Guatemala City Trece-Vision in Spanish	460		
Guatemala City DIARIO DE CENTRO AMERICA in Spanish			330
Guatemala City PRENSA LIBRE in Spanish			1,090
Guatemala City DIARIO EL GRAFICO in Spanish			1,480
HONDURAS			
Tegucigalpa Domestic Service in Spanish	7,600		
Tegucigalpa Voz de Honduras in Spanish	5,500		
Tegucigalpa Cadena Audio Video in Spanish	10,520		
Tegucigalpa Televisora Hondurena in Spanish	3,110		
Tegucigalpa EL HERALDO in Spanish			2,090
Tegucigalpa LA TRIBUNA in Spanish			1,360
San Pedro Sula TIEMPO in Spanish			2,320
San Pedro Sula LA PRENSA in Spanish			820
MEXICO			
		670	STAT
NICARAGUA			
Managua International Service in Spanish	1,510		
Managua Domestic Service in Spanish	49,490		
Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish	10,980		
Managua Radio Sandino Network in Spanish	6,530		

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	BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATIONS
Managua Radio Corporacion in Spanish	10,310		
Managua Sistema Sandinista Television Network in Spanish	14,360		
Managua BARRICADA in Spanish			10,520
Managua EL NUEVO DIARIO in Spanish			5,850
Managua LA PRENSA in Spanish			5,940
PANAMA			
Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish	9,260		
Panama City Circuito RPC-Television in Spanish	10,780		
Panama City Radio Mia Network in Spanish	380		
Panama City Radio Continente in Spanish	3,640		
Panama City ACAN in Spanish		25,750	
Panama City CRITICA in Spanish			3,580
Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish			4,740
Panama City STAR & HERALD in English			300
Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish			5,910
Panama City LA REPUBLICA in English			0
Panama City LA REPUBLICA in Spanish			1,830
Panama City MATUTINO in Spanish			4,760
SPAIN			
Madrid EFE in Spanish		7,450	
UNITED KINGDON			
London REUTER in English		0	
London REUTER in French		0	

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	BROAD- CASTS	PRESS AGENCIES	PUBLI- CATIONS
VENEZUELA			
Caracas Radio Continente Network in Spanish	1,390		
Caracas Radio Rumbos Network in Spanish	380		
Caracas Domestic Service in Spanish	9,400		